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# Reformed Episco

## Address by Rev. Geo. B. Allen at Grace

On last Sunday evening the tenth anniversary of the Reformed Episcopal Church was commemorated at Grace Church, in this city, by special services and an appropriate discourse by the Rector, Rev. George B. Allen, who, nearly two years ago, left the Protestant Episcopal Church and united with the Reformed Episcopal Church. The following is the address:

WHEN, WHERE AND BY WHOM ORGANIZED.

On the second day of December, A. D. 1873, in response to a call issued by Right Reverend George David Cummins, D. D., who for seven years had been the Assistant Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky, a meeting was held in New York for the purpose of organizing a "Reformed Episcopal Church" on the basis of the Prayer Book of 1785, set forth by the Protestant Episcopal Convention of that year, under the special guidance of the venerable William White, D. D., afterwards the first Bishop of the same Church in this country. The *Church and State*, edited by the Rev. John Cotton Smith, D. D., who is still in the old Church, says: "The Bishop, with these seven or eight Presbyters and the laymen associated with them, are men of unblemished Christian character, and some, at least, are men of marked ability." In the *Observer* (Presbyterian), the editor states that "we were present last week on Tuesday, when the 'Reformed Episcopal Church' was organized, and there were some noteworthy signs to be observed, of which we will say a word. It was a *serious* business that the Bishop and they that were with him were engaged in. They looked to God for direction. The Bishop said if it was of God it would stand, and if it was of man he hoped it would fall. There was no self-sufficiency nor human ambition apparent. The whole proceeding was that of humble, prayerful, conscientious men, who were not seeking their own advancement nor the applause of men, but the honor of God only. In case of the Bishop there was positive sacrifice of place, power, salary and friends. He is poor in this world's goods and goes out in faith, for conscience sake. Such a man is always respected, whether men shake their heads at him or not. There were no pastors with him who had renounced their 'livings,' but there were men who were ready to put their future usefulness into the Church, into the same boat with the Bishop, and it was announced that there were twenty-five who were willing to follow him."

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The latter has led a moral, upright life and before he dies exercises faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The baptized can have the service, the unbaptized is deprived of it. The excommunicated may have held the "truth as it is in Jesus" and lived a devoted pious life, but they can not have the service read at their funerals. Those who commit suicide do it generally in a fit of temporary insanity and are not responsible for the act. They may have been the most active members of the Church, but their friends cannot have the full services performed at their burial. The Revised Prayer Book has no such rubric.

The Communion Service contains expressions and requires acts which we believe are opposed to the teaching of Christ. The Reformed Church does not teach that "The Lord's Table is an altar on which the oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ is offered anew to the Father; that the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a presence in the elements of Bread and Wine." It has a simple Scripturial Communion Service free from any mystical superstition. It does not regard the chancel more sacred than any other portion of the Church, the Communion Table more holy than the pew, nor that Christ is nearer to one than the other.

We also have more freedom in the use of our Service Book. Canon 12, Title 1, reads: "On occasions of public worship, invariably on the morning of the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, and at other times at the discretion of the minister, the Prayer Book set forth at any time by the General Council is to be used in the congregation of his Church. Provided, that nothing in this Canon is to be understood as precluding extempore prayer before or after sermons or on emergent occasions." With the exception stated—"on the morning of the Lord's Day"—the regular or an abbreviated or an extemporaneous service can be used.

The minister is not compelled to wear either surplice or gown. Some of our clergy wear both; some wear only the black gown; others wear neither the surplice nor the gown.

The Fermented or unfermented wine can be used.

The congregation has the entire control of its Church property. The Church edifice can be used for lectures on science, morals, and for benevolent objects. The ministers of other denominations can preach in its pulpits; members of other churches are admitted to the Lord's Supper.

These are some of the reasons why liberal Episcopalians want the Reformed Episcopal Church not only for themselves but for their children. We desire that our children should be educated in these principles. We would

heads at him or not. There were no pastors with him who had renounced their 'livings,' but there were men who were ready to put their future usefulness into the Church, into the same boat with the bishop, and it was announced that there were twenty-five who were willing to follow him."

The *Methodist Recorder* says: "It seems to have been a conscientious and honorable step in the direction of reform. The new organization, although small in numbers, includes already some of the most liberal and intelligent ministers and laymen of the age."

THE CAUSES OF ITS ORGANIZATION.

1st. The canonical restrictions whereby the clergy were prohibited from inviting ministers of other denominations into their pulpits, and the strong opposition to those who desired to allow the non-Episcopalians the use of the churches on special occasions. The cases were cited: The trial and public censure of the Rev. Dr. Tyng, Jr., for preaching the gospel in a Methodist Church, and the trial of Rev. Dr. Hubbard for exchanging with a Baptist clergyman.

2d. The introduction of ritualistic innovations which Bishop Cummins could not suppress, and which he and those associated with him could not countenance by remaining in a church that permitted the same.

Writes Bishop Cummins: "I was compelled to stand in the presence of altar and superaltar, of brazen cross and candlestick, and to behold priest and people turning again and again toward that altar and bowing in profound adoration toward it, while to my own soul such acts were idolatrous, dishonoring and insulting to Jesus, the church's only altar, priest and sacrifice."

3d. The refusal of the General Convention to grant the petition of five hundred clergyman for the privilege of using the Collect for Easter Even after the baptism of a child, instead of the one which states that the child is regenerated. The trial and deposition of the Rev. Dr. Cheney for leaving out the word "regenerate" in the baptismal service, was cited.

4th. The publication of a pamphlet by a Presbyter, who was born, educated and died in the Protestant Episcopal Church, entitled "Are there Romanizing Germs in the Prayer Book?"

Bishop Cummins says: "A copy of the Rev. F. S. Rising's tract reached me by mail, and I well remember the repugnance which the very title awakened, and with which I began its perusal. That simple agent was the first instrument for awakening my mind to the truths I had so long ignored, and to the facts of history, into the investigation of which I had shrunk from entering."

There were clergymen and laymen who, after reading this tract, could not use the Book of Common Prayer without conscientious scruples. It must be revised. As the petitions signed by hundreds of clergymen and laymen from all parts of the land, asking for a few changes, were indignantly and contemptuously refused, the hope of relief was utterly lost, and the only consistent course for the souls so sorely oppressed was to go out from the Church of life-

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Beloved, we have a church worth living for, and, if it be necessary, dying for. With love in our hearts for those who oppose us, let us adhere firmly to our conscientious convictions, and work earnestly for the church, which has not only the apostolic polity, but the apostolic spirit. Some of those who are now its warmest supporters have been its strongest and most determined persecutors. In the beginning of the Reformed movement, a clergyman, the Rev. William Newton, D. D., of Philadelphia, signed a paper stating that he had no sympathy with the organization—is now one of the most earnest workers in building up the Reformed Episcopal Church. Though it was a severe trial, no language can express it, for me to leave the associations of nearly thirty years, and those to whom I was so sincerely attached as friend and pastor, I have not the least desire to return into the Protestant Episcopal Church while it remains as it is; and there is no prospect of its becoming more Protestant and more liberal.

In the language of the *Episcopal Recorder*, our Church paper, "and now, as on this our Decennial Anniversary, we review all the way whereby the Lord our God has led us," it is with adoring gratitude we tell the story of His dealings with us. Though of such recent origin, so far as our *name* is concerned, it is most significant as to our real character and meaning, that we have no portion in, or sympathy with, any of the novelties of these latter days. On the contrary, all our affiliations are with the truths and the records of the past. With no presumptuousness of thought—but with simple thankfulness to God for the privilege—we claim we have built up "the old waste places; wrested from the footsteps of the destroyer, and raised up the foundations of many generations." We point to all that marks our character and mission as a Church as proof of this claim. We have no Altar but the Cross, no Sacrifice but the One offered thereon—the One Sacrifice for sins forever; no priest but Jesus Christ, and no absolution but that which He pronounces. We are one with all "who adhere to Christ by faith, who are partakers of the Holy Ghost, and who worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

The winds of trial have been let loose upon us. But we feel that they have made our roots go down deeper into the soil of the love of God in Christ, and prepared us, we trust, for bearing more abundant fruit to the glory of His name. And on this, our Decennial Anniversary, as we review the past and look forward to the future, we devoutly thank God and take courage.